

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9, 12, 14, 15 and 19-22 now stand in the present application, claims 1, 9, 12 and 15 having been amended, new claims 21 and 22 having been added, and claims 10, 11, 13 and 16-18 having been canceled. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-8, 13, 19 and 20, but respectfully submit that in view of the above amendments and the following remarks that all of the claims now standing in this case are in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, reconsideration and favorable action in this case is respectfully requested.

In order to expeditiously place this case in condition for allowance, Applicants have incorporated the allowable subject matter of claim 13 (and dependent claims 10 and 11), into claim 9, accordingly claim 9 respectfully represents claim 13 written in independent form. In addition, Applicants have amended claim 15 so as to insert the allowable subject matter of claim 13 (and claims 10 and 11) into claim 15 so as to put claim 15 also in condition for allowance. Finally, the dependency of claim 12 has been amended to allowable claim 9 and new claims 21 and 22 which correspond to claims 14 and 12, respectively, now depend from amended claim 15. Rejected claims 10, 11 and 16-18 have been canceled.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all of claims 1-9, 12, 14, 15 and 19-22, now standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is

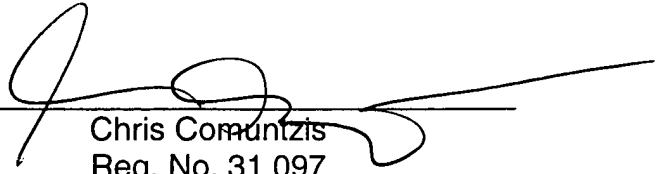
KIMATA et al.
Appl. No. 09/885,023
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respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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